(d) The work of extension of runway at Silchar airport is likely to be completed by March, 2007.

Increase in air passenger

2205. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether a number of private airlines have been permitted to operate within and outside the country;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) whether as a result, air passengers have increased manifold;

(d) if so, the details in this regard for last three years;

(e) whether the existing infrastructure and facilities at the airports are inadequate to handle the increased air passengers traffic and on account of which the operators as well as the passengers face a lot of hardship; and

(f) if so, how the congestion is proposed to be reduced and passenger convenience enhanced at the airports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes Sir. M/s Jet Airways (India) Ltd., M/s Sahara Airlines Ltd., M/s Deccan Aviation Pvt. Ltd., M/s Kingfisher Airlines Ltd., M/s Spicejet Ltd. and M/s Blue Dart Aviation Ltd. (Cargo) have been permitted to operate within the country. Besides M/s Jet Airways (India) Ltd. and M/s Sahara Airlines Ltd. have also been permitted to operate on specified international routes.

(c) and (d) Yes Sir. The number of passengers handled by the top 45 operational airports in the country during 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05 are 43723324,48779611 and 59283800 respectively.

(e) and (f) Yes Sir. Modernization and development of infrastructure facilities at the airports is a continuous process and is undertaken on the operational requirements for safety of aircraft operation and demand from airlines. To meet the growing demand, development works viz. expansion and modification of terminal buildings, extension and development of runways, construction of additional parking stands etc. have been taken

up/planned at major airports in a phased manner depending upon availability of land and other facilities.

Upgradation of airports in Karnataka

2206. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Government of Karnataka has sent proposals for establishment of new airports or for upgradation of the existing airports at Mysore, Gulbarga, Hassan, Hampi, Belgaum, etc., in view of the increasing demand for air connectivity to these locations;

(b) if so, the details in this regard; and

(c) the current status of the proposals and the likely date by which these proposals would be approved?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) State Government of Karnataka has sent a proposal to Airports Authority of India (AAI) to develop the existing airstrips at Mysore and Belgaum and construct new airports at Gulbarga, Hasan and Hampi. State Government has *inter-alia* agreed to provide required land for upgradation and creation of infrastructures facilities to AAI free of cost and free from all encumbrances. AAI and State Government of Karnataka are in the process of signing an MOU in the case of Mysore airstrip for which State Government has already identified required land and the same will be transferred to AAI for construction of new runway, terminal complex and associated facilities for operationalization of airstrip. The construction period of Mysore airport will be 24 months after award of work. Construction of Greenfield airports at Hassan and Gulbarga will depend on the feasibility report/traffic study. In case of Humpi, the site has not been finalised. Talks on above proposals are on with the Government of Karnataka.

Upgradation of Srinagar airport as an international airport

2207. PROF. SAIF-UD-DIN SOZ : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any plan to revamp the airports in the country;, and